

SPIRITUAL DIRECTIONS
FOR THE
UNINSTRUCTED;

NOT LESS PROPER

For the Use of Infirmary PATIENTS,

THAN FOR

The UNINSTRUCTED in all CONDITIONS.

By JAMES STONHOUSE, M. D.
Physician to the County *Infirmary* at Northampton; and
formerly of St. *John's* College, Oxford.

*My Heart's Desire, and Prayer to GOD is, that they might be
saved. ROM. X. 1.*

*The meek will He guide in Judgment; and the meek will He
teach his Way. PSAL. XXV. 9.*

THE TENTH EDITION.



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SPIRITUAL DIRECTIONS

FOR THE

ADVANCEMENT

OF THE

NOT LESS

For the Life of Immortal Happiness

OF THE

THE

BY JAMES STONOR, M.D.

PHYSICIAN TO THE

THE

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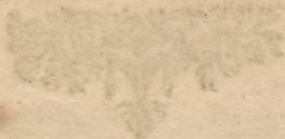
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WHEREAS Objections may be made to the *more minute* Explanations annexed to some of these DIRECTIONS, it should always be remembered, that a *Traveller* inquiring after a Road, to which He is an absolute Stranger, will receive from a skilful *Director*, such Information, as to another already acquainted with the Way, would appear tedious and superfluous: Yet the Stranger's Attention to the several Particulars will *only be necessary*, till by Use the Road becomes familiar to Him, and He will then find himself able to proceed without them.—In like Manner, the *Explanations here given of the DIRECTIONS* are intended for such, as being utterly unacquainted with the Ways of Religion and Piety, are supposed to be setting out upon a new Course. Some of them likewise are of a greater Length, that they may lie within the Apprehension of the lowest Capacities; such for Instance are the Instructions concerning Prayer;—especially ejaculatory Prayer, of which they suppose the Reader totally ignorant.—HABIT will render many of *these* no longer necessary: And, it is well known how far *that alone*, will, by Degrees, render those Things, not only easy, but natural, in which we at *first* apprehended great Difficulty.

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SPIRITUAL DIRECTIONS

FOR THE

UNINSTRUCTED.



CONDESCEND to Men of low Estate, is a Precept our great MASTER has taught us, by *his own Example*, as well as by his *Apostle*, Rom. xiii. 16. And I have endeavoured to act upon this benevolent Principle, in thus supplying the Poor and Uninstructed with SPIRITUAL DIRECTIONS, for the *daily Conduct* of a *real Christian's Life*; and though I have added *Explanations* more *familiar*, and more *minute*, than might be *necessary* for those of a *higher Rank*, and *better Education*, yet the Substance of them may, I hope, be useful to many others;—and I persuade myself, no wise Readers will despise what is Matter of *universal Concern*, because it is *particularly* calculated for the Use of those who may, in many Respects, be inferior to Themselves.

DIRECTION I.

Consider that Faith, (or Belief *) in Jesus Christ, is that Corner Stone upon which all your Hopes of Salvation, and Success in your religious Duties must necessarily be founded.

WHEN I am exhorting you to Acts of religious Worship, you must not imagine, that I am inviting you to be a mere Formalist, and to rest upon the
Deed

* By a Belief in Jesus Christ, is meant what the Apostle calls "Believing with the Heart," Rom. ix. 10. that is, such a lively Persuasion of the Power and Grace of Christ, and of our very great Need of *his Favour*, as engages us to receive *him* under all his
B Offices,

Deed done: No,—I invite you to come as a Believer, or a real Christian, without which you should dread to appear in the Presence of GOD, “*for our God is a consuming Fire.*” “CHRIST is the Way, the Truth and the Life; and there is no other Name given among Men, whereby we must be saved:—He that *believes* in HIM, out of his Belly (as the Scripture expresses it) shall flow Rivers of the Water of Life; and He that *believes not* on HIM shall not see Life, but remains under the Wrath of God.”

And as all our Hope of Salvation is dependent on a lively Faith in Christ, so is all our Success in our religious Duties. Examine yourself therefore most strictly, whether you have indeed a true Faith, and ask yourself seriously, whether, above all Things, you desire Union and Communion with CHRIST? Whether you long to be delivered from the *Power*, as well as from the *Guilt* of Sin? Whether Faith works by Love, not only to GOD and CHRIST, but to your Fellow-Christians? Whether you endeavour to make the Love of GOD your Principle, his Word your Rule, and his Glory your End in all your Actions? Whether you strive to add to your Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godliness; and to Godliness, Brotherly Kindness; and to Brotherly Kindness, Charity?—If these Things be in you and abound, they will be sure Signs of a lively Faith; but without you have them in some Measure, you are not purged from your old Corruptions.

Offices, *viz.* as our Prophet, our Priest, and our King, that we may obtain the Salvation which *he* has *promised*, and in the Way which *he* has appointed in his Gospel.---And remember it is in *this* Sense, *Belief* (or *Faith*) is to be understood, when the *whole* Stress of our being saved is laid upon it.---Compare the following Texts: “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved; And they said, BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ,*” Acts xvi. 30, 31.---“*And this is his Commandment, that we should BELIEVE in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and LOVE one another.*” John iii. 23.

Not that He, who finds himself at present utterly destitute of divine Grace, has any Reason to despair; for the Ground of Faith is the *free Promise* of God made to such Sinners (not yet believing) that they, *believing in Christ*, and *forsaking their Sins*, shall be pardoned: Tho' Faith and Repentance are not in themselves the *Cause* of Pardon, (for the *Cause* is the Mercy of God and the Merits of Christ) but they are the *Means*, without which it can never be obtained: Thus opening our Eyes is no *Cause* of Vision, but it is the *Means* without which we can never see. If we repent not, our Sins shall not be forgiven; if we believe not in Christ, we shall not have everlasting Life; if we abhor not our past Sins, we cannot be said to sincerely repent of them, nor can we justly hope that they will be forgiven.—Christ freely pardons all who accept his Invitation, and by Faith we pray to Him that we may not only freely be **PARDONED**, but **SANCTIFIED** likewise.—He grossly deceives himself, who imagines that God will grant Him a *Pardon*, and a Permission to continue in wilful Sin.—A Change to Holiness in his Mind and Affections, and the Consequences of that in his future Conduct, is to him the Evidence of that saving Grace, which has been freely bestowed on him by Christ, to cure his Sin-sick Soul.

And here let me, once for all, give you *two* most important **CAUTIONS**, which I must intreat you to bear in Mind, not only whenever you use this little Treatise, but during the whole Course of your Life, in order to prevent your running into either of those *opposite Extremes*, which alas! too naturally flow “*from a Zeal without Knowledge*,” and are equally dangerous, and subversive of true Christianity. The Want of Attention to these two Cautions has greatly distracted some, and misled other pious and sincere Christians.

The *first Caution* is, that you by no Means admit a Thought tending to the Opinion, *that Faith in Christ, and the Atonement made by him (on which alone our Hopes of Salvation are fixed) may be ever so understood, as if you were thereby freed from the Necessity of Obedience to all*

God's Commands. The second is, *that you always retain an equal Abhorrence of the false Supposition, that Obedience, on your Part, can in any Degree be meritorious.*

As to the *first*, I must observe, that such a Supposition would indeed totally destroy the Fundamentals of Religion; make practical Godliness of no Signification, and open a Door to all Manner of Licentiousness.—Let us not deceive ourselves: God has redeemed us by the Death of Christ, that we might be a peculiar People to himself, zealous of good Works. He has lent us Talents *, and will call us to an Account for the Use and Improvement of them.—Real and vital Holiness is inseparably connected with a living Faith. It is an *essential* and very *distinguished* Part of the Salvation procured by Jesus Christ, who died not only to purchase our Pardon by his Blood; but He ascended likewise on High, that He might lead Captivity Captive, give Gifts to Men, and send his Holy Spirit to restore our fallen Nature to that Image and Resemblance of the Divine Nature, wherein consists the Happiness of the Angels in Heaven; and by which Resemblance alone, we can be prepared to enjoy it with them.

I shall endeavour to illustrate this very important Truth by the following Comparison, which I have placed in opposite Columns, that it may *more clearly* be apprehended by common Readers.

Suppose some wretched Malefactor condemned for his Crimes, to suffer an ignominious Death.

Of what Importance would a PARDON be to such a one, if, at the same Time, he was languishing in the last State of a Consumption, or under a Complication of Diseases, for which he knew NO CURE?

Suppose likewise some miserable Sinner condemned for his Transgression, to suffer eternal Torments.

Of what Importance would a PARDON be to such a one, if he was still under the Power of his deadly Lusts, the accursed Sickness of the Mind, for which he knew NO CURE?—And which Lusts, as they pre-

* See Matth. xxv. 15.

—And which Diseases, as they prevent his Body from receiving its natural Nourishment, must inevitably and speedily bring him to the Grave.

But could he obtain a PARDON by the Hand of a Physician, who, at the same Time, would bring, as a sure Remedy, some sovereign Medicine to operate powerfully upon him, till his drooping Nature was revived, and the Cure performed :

Then a PARDON would *indeed* avail, and he would have true Reason to rejoice for so complete a Deliverance, because, by efficacious Medicines, he would be restored to that Health of Body, which would enable him to enjoy the Society of his Fellow-Creatures.

vent his Soul from receiving its spiritual Nourishment, must inevitably and speedily bring him to Destruction.

But could he obtain a PARDON from the Hand of Christ, who, at the same Time, would bring, as a Remedy, the Holy Spirit, to operate continually upon him, till the New Man was raised in him, and he had attained an utter Abhorrence of Sin, and a Delight to do the Will of God :

Then a PARDON would *indeed* avail, and he would have true Reason to rejoice for so complete a Deliverance; because, by the constant Operations of the Holy Spirit, he would be restored to vital Holiness, that Health of Soul, which would enable him to enjoy the Society of the Blessed.

Happy it is for us (and Oh that we were but sufficiently sensible of the inestimable Blessing) that polluted as we are, we have a Physician in our Judge, able to PARDON our Sins, and to HEAL our distempered Souls.—Let every desponding Sinner then * attend for his Consolation, to our Saviour's Call, “ † Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.” Remember that he is the Fountain ‡ open for Sin and Uncleaness; thither come therefore and wash away your Sins, calling upon the Name of the Lord.—Go

* Eph. v. 14.

† Matt. xi. 28.

‡ Zech. xiii. 1.

“ boldly to the Throne of Grace, that you may obtain
 “ Mercy, and find Grace to help you in Time of Need.”

My *second* Caution is, that you always retain an equal Abhorrence of the false Supposition, that Obedience on your Part can be in any Degree meritorious.—This most absurd and arrogant Supposition, I should think, could never enter into a Mind endued with human Reason, and conscious of human Infirmities.—It appears so shocking to my Apprehension, that I charitably hope and believe that few, if any, really hold this Tenet of SELF-SUFFICIENCY, whatever may be supposed. It will be difficult, perhaps, to produce even one, who will dare to avow it, without such Qualification or Restriction as may serve, upon Occasion, to explain it away; which, by the by, is no uncommon Artifice in Disputes on such Subjects.—That Church, whereof I am a Member, leaves no Room in her public Offices, for a Supposition of any such Tenet. Every Prayer in our Liturgy (or Book of Common Prayer) is presented to God in the Name of Jesus Christ, pursuant to the Declaration of Scripture, “ No Man cometh to the Father but by me*—
 “ Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you †.”—Shall we then presume to take Delight in our own Worth, when we are not judged worthy ‡ so much as even to ask Pardon for our Sins, without the Mediation and Intercession of the Son of God?—Two Things are absolutely necessary to constitute a Work meritorious, namely, that it is wholly our own, and that He for whom we perform it, wants it on his own Ac-

* See John xiv. 6.

† See John xvi. 23.

‡ See the Collect for the twelfth Sunday after Trinity; which may be used at any Time when you implore God for the Forgiveness of your Sins.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than I to pray, and art wont to give more than either I desire or deserve; pour down upon me the Abundance of thy Mercy, forgiving me those Things whereof my Conscience is afraid, and giving me those good Things which I am not worthy to ask, but through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord. Amen.

count. As to the *first*, St. Paul assures us, that we are not of ourselves sufficient to think any Thing of ourselves (2 Cor. iii. 5.) — And if not, then we are not sufficient of ourselves to begin a good Work : For surely before a good Work can be begun, we must first think of it, and reason concerning it. What then have we which we have not received ? And if we have received it, the Obligation must doubtless lie on the Receiver, and not on the Giver.—As to the *second*, granting that our Works were pure and perfect (the very best of which are far from having such a Claim) nay, granting that Angels or Archangels could not perform better, still they would have no *Merit* towards God, because he wants no Aid from *us* in any Respect.—Indeed, one *Mortal*, however great and elevated his Station may be, wants the Service of another : A Master wants the Assistance of a Servant, and a King the Help of his Subjects ; but our supreme Master, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is neither the stronger, the richer, or the happier for any Services *we* can render Him ; nor the weaker, the poorer, or the less happy for any Omission of such Services. Our Obedience therefore is not required for *his* Sake, but for *our own* ; because we can obtain Happiness no other Way, than by obeying his righteous Laws, and conforming to his holy Will, and consequently our good Works, tho' profitable to ourselves, are of no Advantage to God.

Add likewise, that the most refined Nature derived from *Adam* by natural Generation, was never yet found without Imperfection. The Scripture has pronounced all to be under the Dominion of Sin ; there is none in a State of Nature righteous, no, not one.

Briefly—It is in Christ alone, that God is well pleased ; and with *us* in Him ; so that no Man can come unto God but by Him, and every Thing that we would receive we must ask in his Name.—A Consideration methinks which should comfort the Weak-hearted, while it humbles the Haughty and Self-sufficient : For let your Prayers be ever so proper in the Form and Expression ; or let your Heart accompany them with a Devotion ever

so intense, still they become acceptable to God through Christ *alone*; and are the *Means* indeed to *make you good*, but the *Goodness itself* is not in *them*; no more than a Favour amongst Men can be said to be *deserved*, because *asked* with Humility, Propriety, and Elegance.—If therefore you was to trust in *them*, as meritorious in any Degree, it would be making IDOLS of your PRAYERS; it would be putting *them* in the Place of Christ's *Atonement*, which is quite contrary to praying, as an unworthy Sinner, in the Name of Christ. These *two* Cautions being sufficiently explained, and *both* Extremes being of such dangerous Consequence, it is hoped that they will be frequently considered, and duly regarded.

DIRECTION II.

Pray without ceasing; that is to say, be continually in a praying Disposition, and on every Exigence let your Requests be made known unto God in the Name of Christ, for yourself and others, and praise him for every Blessing you have received.

IT has been observed by St. *Augustine*, “That he who constantly desires eternal Life of God, prays always, or without ceasing.” This Thought is just; but, however, in the Apostle's Language, he is said to do that continually, which he does at fit Times daily: So the Sacrifice offered Morning and Evening, is called the continual Burnt-Offering, *Exod.* xxix. 39, 42.—And in Allusion to this, perhaps St. *Paul* might tell *Timothy*, that *without ceasing*, He had Remembrance of Him in his Prayers Night and Day, 2 *Tim.* i. 3. But more particularly Prayer, I think may with Propriety be divided into *sudden*, and *solemn*. By the *former* we offer up short and *sudden* Petitions at the Throne of Grace, on every Occasion, in the Midst of our worldly Employments. By the *latter* we quit our worldly Employments, that we may in a more enlarged and *solemn* Manner

Manner address our heavenly Father: The *latter* has appropriated the Name of Prayer to itself, tho' *both* are equally so, and equally acceptable in the Sight of God, if offered up in the Name of Christ, according to his Will. Petitions of the *former* Sort are called *Ejaculations*.—Perhaps the uninstructed Reader will best understand me, if I give some *Instances*, in this Kind of Prayer. Thus the first Office every Day, should be Thankfulness, which may be expressed in some such Ejaculation as this.

Praised be thy holy Name, O LORD my Redeemer, for preserving me from all the Dangers of the Night past, and for adding one Day more to my Life. Give me, I beseech thee, Grace, that I may, to the utmost of my Ability, employ it to thy Glory, and the Salvation of my immortal Soul.

But, besides the Morning, there will other Occasions offer for pious Ejaculations all the Day long; and I would earnestly recommend them as the best Means of guarding against the first Assaults of Temptation, and of keeping up constant Communion with God. So on some remarkable Deliverance, you may say—"Blessed be thy holy Name, O LORD, for this Mercy."—On some good Work performed—"Thanks be to God who has enabled me to perform this Work; I am nevertheless an unprofitable Servant."—On some sudden Appearance of Danger—"Good LORD deliver me from this Danger." Or "Take me, O God, under thy Protection."—On some sudden Temptation from Satan, the World, or the Flesh—"Guard me against this Temptation."—On some Fall into Sin through Infirmary—"Pardon, I beseech Thee, this my Sin."—On some Sight of your own Corruption—"Give me a new Heart, and renew a right Spirit within me."—On hearing of the Death of Friends—"Teach me, so to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart unto Wisdom"—and such like.

Every Sentence of the LORD's Prayer likewise may be considered, and used, as a distinct Ejaculation; as may every Petition, or Thanksgiving, in the Bible; or in any other Prayer, if it suits your Case: Endeavour there-
fore

fore to become “a Scribe well instructed to the Kingdom*,” and make the Word of God your Study, and you will never want † Expressions to carry on this heavenly Correspondence.

Solemn Prayer may well be divided into two Parts, *occasional* and *stated*. OCCASIONAL, as in Times of Affliction, or Sicknefs; the Mind of Man being then like a weak Plant under Pressure, and God its only Support; and every important Occasion in Life will furnish Matter for Prayers suitable to it.—STATED, or fixed to certain Times and proper Opportunities, as Morning and Evening Prayers.

When you are dressed in the Morning, offer up the following Prayer (or somewhat to the like Purpose) before you are engaged in any worldly Business. An Awe of GOD on your Hearts, will direct you to use the most humble and devout Postures and Gestures, when you make your Addresses to him; such as Kneeling, Hands uplifted, a dejected or serene Countenance, Tears, &c. But in Company, where any of these cannot be complied with, as among Servants, Travellers, or the Sick, &c. then pray either as you sit, as you stand, as you ride, or as you lie. GOD at all Times, especially at such Times, regards not so much the Posture of the Body, as the Disposition of the Heart:—“*Son* “*give me thy Heart,*” is his Demand in Scripture. Whether therefore your Prayers are long, or short, keep your Heart with all Diligence; and be sure they are not short for Want of Fervour.

Let me prevail on all my Readers to rise early, for the Pillow is a treacherous Counsellor, and TIME is too precious to be lost in an *unnecessary* Indulgence;

* Matt. xiii. 52.

† Nature directs every Man, even the most profligate, to utter sudden Ejaculations, in Cases of Surprise, or imminent Danger, where there can be no Time for Premeditation, (such as “Lord have Mercy upon me,” &c.) The natural Language too of the Illiterate, will readily express their own sincere and devout Sentiments, on any Emergency; and not the less acceptable to God, for what we, weak Mortals, should esteem an Impropriety or Defect.

which

which may, in many Circumstances, be more criminal than the Generality of us are aware: For if they cannot comply with *so small* an Instance of Self-denial, how can *others*, which may be more difficult, be expected!—Only consider how greatly the Gain of an Hour or two, every Day from Sloth and Insensibility, really adds to the Term of your Life, as well as conduces to the Preservation of your Health.—For in Effect, he can scarcely be said to live, who has no Sense of his Being, or Use of his Faculties; and the Habit of more or less Indulgence, is known to make an astonishing Difference in these last, when we are awake, and capable of using them.

A Prayer * for the Morning.

N. B. *The Reader will observe that the Words me, myself, my, &c., are printed in a different Letter thro' the whole of the Prayers for Morning and Evening.—When therefore they are used for Family Prayers, read we instead of I, our for my, us for me, with such other Alterations as Circumstances may require:—But I would by no Means have these Prayers improperly repeated by using them on the same Day, first in secret Devotion, and afterwards in public with the Family—nor yet imagine, that the Performance of one of these Duties will be sufficient without the other, where both are practicable.*

Thanksgiving. **A** Almighty and most merciful God, with my whole Heart I thank thee for my Preservation during the past Night, and for adding another

* Observe, that for the Benefit of such as are very weak, or have frequent Returnings of violent Pain, which may render them incapable of using, with due Attention and Devotion, any large Forms of Prayer, Care has been taken that these here given, should not be long, or diffusive, and yet regular in the Division. *Servants and Day-Labourers, would do well to consider how small a Portion of Time will be required for their early rising, in Order to perform the necessary Duty of Prayer before they enter upon that, which belongs to their several Stations. Such as cannot read, (especially Patients in an Infirmary) might, by some charitable Friend, be taught*

ther Day to my Life, while so many are cut off unprepared, and unwarned.

Self-Dedication to God.

To thee, and to thy Service, I most humbly dedicate *myself*, with all the Powers and Faculties both of *my Soul and Body*. Every Talent which I have is indeed thine own; but I sincerely resolve, and will most earnestly endeavour, to improve it to thy Glory and *my own Salvation*, for which Ends I was created.

Petition for Grace.

Let thy all-powerful Grace possess and fill *my Heart*, without which, I am utterly unable to pursue these sincere Purposes: I know I can do all Things, necessary for Salvation, thro' Christ, who strengtheneth *me*; grant, O LORD, that through him I may be enabled to run, with Delight, the Race which is set before *me*, and so run as to obtain the glorious Prize.

Petition in Behalf of others.

Send down thy saving Health upon the whole Race of Mankind, and give them the Love and Fear of thee; but particularly bless *my Relations and Friends*.—Pardon *my Enemies*, and turn their Hearts; and grant to all Men whatsoever is needful or profitable, either for the Welfare of their Bodies, or the Salvation of their Souls.

Petition for God's Blessing on the Business of the Day.

Enable *me*, LORD of all Power and Goodness, faithfully to perform the several Duties belonging to that Station in which thy Providence has placed *me*, and bless *me* in the Execution of them. May I live all the Day long under a grateful Sense of thy fatherly Protection, and in a lively Hope of everlasting Glory, thro' JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

taught to repeat them by Heart; which may to the Teachers, as well as the Learners, be a very profitable Exercise, during their Confinement, if their Illness be not extreme.

Those who have very weak Memories, and many Children of five or six Years old, may be taught to get these short Forms of Prayer by Heart.---But if even these should be thought too long, (which I hope will seldom be the Case) I would then recommend the Use of the LORD'S PRAYER only, with the important Words of St. Paul; namely, May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

On *Sunday Morning*, let what follows between the Hooks [thus] be us'd instead of the Petition for God's Blessing on your Business.

[Blessed be thou, O LORD, for setting apart a Day for the noblest Employment of created Beings, that of serving and glorifying their divine Master.—Teach *me* to remember this thy Command; and to shew *my* Obedience in devoutly attending upon thy Service, and fervently joining in the several Parts of it. Let thy Words delivered, and explained by the Mouth of thy Ministers, find a ready Admission into my Heart, and not be lost through Carelessness, or rendered fruitless by the vain Pursuits of the World. *Amen.*]

The following may be added, or not.

O Thou that hearest Prayer, hear these my imperfect Petitions, humbly presented in thy Son's Name; by whose Gospel *I* have been instructed, encouraged, and in-jointed thus to address Thee.

Our FATHER, which art in Heaven;—Hallowed be thy Name.—Thy Kingdom come.—Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.—Give us this Day our daily Bread.—And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that Trespas against us.—And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil:—For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Whether you conclude your Devotions with the Lord's Prayer, or without it, it will be equally proper to add these important Words of the Apostle, which contain a Summary of all the inestimable Blessings you have been imploring; and of all, that constitutes the Happiness of a Christian.

2 Cor. xiii. 14.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,—and the Love of God,—and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with *me* [or *us*] and with all, whom *I* [or *we*] ought to remember in *my* [or *our*] Prayers this Day [or *Night*] and for evermore! *Amen.*

When you arise from your Knees, be very thankful that God has allowed you, through the Merits and Intercession of his SON, the Privilege of Prayer. Re-
C flect

fleet seriously on the Temper, in which you presented your Addresses at the Throne of Divine Mercy; as whether you prayed with Understanding, sensible of your Sins and Wants; with Fervency, with Hope to succeed, and with Love to your Brethren. Remember likewise that you *live* suitably to your Prayers, and continue heavenly-minded all the Day long.

At Evening Prayer be particularly watchful against Drowsiness, and never fix the Hour too late in your Family, as they will then be unavoidably fatigued and sleepy.—Go not therefore to your Knees in such a Disposition, and with Carelessness and Indifference, merely out of Custom, and only to keep up *the Form of Prayer*, frequently gaping and half asleep; but be conscientious in this solemn Duty, with an Eye to the great God of Heaven and Earth; always remembering, that inattentive lifeless Prayer is an unacceptable Offering, and all Confidence in *that* is an Abomination to the most High.—Consider too, that one Sentence issuing from the Heart, and sincerely accompanied by the Affections, is of more Value than many Pages carelessly read over, or the most complete Forms *inattentively* repeated.—Let every one of you, when you pray, be slow in your Utterance, and earnest in your Affections;—make a Stop at the End of every Petition, that you may ponder upon the inestimable Worth of the Blessing you implore; that it may be the Desire of your *Heart*, as well as the Request of your *Tongue*; and may the God of all Goodness enable you, “in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving, to let your Requests be
“ made known unto him.” *Phil. iv. 6.*

A Prayer for the Evening.

✠ *When this is used as a Family Prayer, see the Directions given before that in the Morning.—Namely, using we for I, us for me, &c.*

Thanksgiving. MOST Great and Glorious GOD,
with the deepest Humiliation, and utmost Gratitude, I thank thee for all thy Mercies which thy bountiful Hand hath bestowed upon *me*, particularly those
of

of this Day; and above all, for the reviving Hopes and Expectations of a far better Life in thy eternal Kingdom.

Confession. I acknowledge my Ingratitude, and am truly penitent for my manifold Breaches of thy Commands by Thought, Word, and Deed, especially by the Sins* of this Day. I am grieved and ashamed, that I have omitted or neglected the Duties which I ought to have observed.

But thou, Lord God, aboundest in Mercy, and thy Son Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners. For his Sake, Father of everlasting Compassion, forgive all that is past, and cleanse me from all Unrighteousness. I have destroyed myself, but in him there is plenteous Redemption.—I desire to rely on him as my Saviour; to submit to him as my LORD; and to comply with his most reasonable, and most gracious Terms of Pardon and Salvation.

Petition for Grace. Grant me, O LORD, thy all-powerful Grace and Assistance, to supply the Weakness of my Endeavours, and to reform and regulate my depraved Will and evil Affections.—Preserve me from the Sin of Unbelief in thy Promises, and let me ever remember them, to my great and endless Comfort.

On Sunday Evening let what follows between the Hooks [thus] be added to this Prayer, but at no other Time.

[Most gracious God, I lament, as my Unhappiness as well as my Fault, that I love thee no better; and I am grieved to think of my Coldness and Inattention, which has too often appeared during my Attendance on the solemn Service of this thy Day. Accept of such imperfect Offerings as I have been able to make. Grant that I may meditate upon thy Law with Profit and Delight; and that the good Seed sown in my Heart, may take deep Root, and bring forth abundant Fruits; that so my Conversation may be such, as becometh the Disciple and

* Here make a short Pause for Recollection, and secret Confession of the Sins and Failings of the Day:---But a more particular Confession may be made in private, either *before* or *after* Prayer, as we have Time for a fuller Self-Examination.

Follower of *my* blessed Instructor, and Master JESUS CHRIST.]

*Petition in
Behalf of
others.* Be merciful, and gracious to the whole Race of Mankind, particularly those to whom I am more immediately related, as likewise to this Family. I beg thy Blessing on all those I ought to pray for, and on those who pray for *me*, particularly on the Afflicted. Reconcile them, O Lord, to their Sufferings, and all of us to thyself; and give them and us, whatsoever thine infinite Wisdom knows to be necessary, both for our spiritual and temporal Welfare.

*For Rest and
Protection.* I commit *myself* unto thee, O God; this Night, beseeching thee to give *me* Rest, and to keep *me* in Safety: Or, if *my* Soul should be required of *me* before the Morning Light, receive *me* to thy Mercy, through the Merits and Mediation of JESUS CHRIST, in whom thou art always well pleased. *Amen.*

The following may be added, or not.

O Thou that hearest Prayer, &c. See Page 13.

Our FATHER, &c. See Page 13.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus, &c. See Page 13.

These Prayers I have divided regularly, as such Divisions may be of very great Use, by preserving Order, and preventing Confusion in our Addresses to God, particularly in reminding us of what we want, and for what we ought to ask. It is therefore hoped, that the several Heads, or Divisions, will by carefully observed and imprinted in our Memories; with a View to which, I have inserted the Divisions in the Margin on the Sides of the Prayers.—By the Blessing of God upon the Use of these Means, we may be enabled *in Time* to pursue the same Order and Method both Morning and Evening, in our *own* Words and Expressions; namely, in Thanksgivings and Petitions formed out of our *own* Hearts. A Circumstance greatly to be desired, as it will form the Mind to a *Habit* of regular Prayer; but this can only be attained by a diligent Use of *our* Talents; that is to say, by devout and constant Practice.

The

The Use too of these Divisions, I think may be extended still farther; as by this Method, such as are young, may happily become acquainted with the Design and Meaning of what they repeat; so as more early in Life to acquire the inestimable Habit of *Praying with the Understanding*, and performing to their Creator, in their Youth, a reasonable Service.

There is also a *stated* Time of short Address to the Almighty, when we sit down to our common Meals. Our SAVIOUR, while on Earth, glorified God, by solemnly looking up to Heaven, and blessing the Loaves and Fishes, before he distributed them to those, who sat down to eat: (see *Mark* vi. 41.) And *St. Paul*, though in Bonds, in Presence of a numerous Company of Heathens*, would not omit this necessary Duty.—God intended we should *use*, with Moderation, *all* his good Things, but *Thanksgiving* is the *Condition*: That therefore the most Ignorant may not want proper Words to beg God's Blessing on their daily Food, and to return him Thanks for it, the following Graces may be constantly used.

Grace before Meals.

Bless, O LORD, these thy good Creatures, to our Use, and us to thy Service, through JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

Grace after Meals.

Accept, O LORD, our humble and hearty *Thanks* for these, and all thy other Mercies, through JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

An Address to God ought, doubtless, to be most serious and solemn, let me intreat you therefore to be very composed and reverential in the Discharge of this Duty; since to perform it in a slight and negligent Manner, must be *shocking* to all good Men, and sinful before God;—more sinful, perhaps, than even the Omission itself: And if he, who asks the *Blessing* of, or return the *Thanks* to the Almighty, in the Name of the rest, should *presume* to do it in an *irreverent* Manner; every one present will, I hope, remember, that he is as much obliged to repeat the Grace in his own Mind, as if *nothing* had passed at Table. This is easily done without appearing singular,

* See *Acts* xxvii. 35.

or giving any Offence, should you happen to be in the Company of your Superiors, whom it may not be *at all Times* consistent with Prudence to admonish: For, in some Cases, the very Attempt would be productive of Sneers, Ridicule, and perhaps Profaneness. It is no Man's Duty, to give an ill-timed, or an unbecoming Reprimand; and it is the Province of Reason to determine how far such Admonitions are decent, and likely to do Good or Harm.

As little Children are too often uninstructed, at a Time when they are most susceptible of Improvement, the following Prayer, either for Morning or Evening, will not, I hope, be without its Use.

MOST gracious *Father*, look down, I beseech thee, upon a *helpless Child*. Incline my Heart to remember, love, and serve thee in the Days of my Youth; and keep me from every evil Thought, and Word, and Work: Make me dutiful to my Parents, loving to all my Relations, obedient to my Teachers, and always in a Disposition to hear Advice and receive Instruction. Keep me this Day [or Night] from every Danger, and grant all my humble Requests, for the Sake of JESUS CHRIST my Saviour, in whom alone thou art

Our FATHER, &c.

The Grace of our LORD, &c.

As I cannot but be solicitous lest any one (be his Station or Capacity ever so mean) should be destitute of proper Assistance for the Performance of Prayer; and as many stand in Need of *Forms* for this Purpose, I have, for the Help of such, added what I apprehend to be of the most general Use. Yet I am very sensible that no precomposed Forms can be so compiled as to suit the *particular* Circumstances of every Man; consequently, he must often lie under the Necessity of cloathing *his own* Thoughts in *his own* Language, when he approaches the Throne of Grace; and he is undoubtedly obliged (as far as he is able) to endeavour after proper and reverential

tial Expressions, though it is not expected that a Clown should pray, any more than behave, with the same Elegance as the Gentleman.

It is to be hoped, that such as are Heads of Families (if they have any Regard to their own eternal Salvation, and that of their Domesticks) will not fail to pray with them every Morning, when it can be complied with, as well as every Evening; and that they who have been Patients in an Infirmary, and learned to pray there, will be careful to *practise* that necessary Duty at *Home*, with those whom God has committed to their Care, as well as in their own Retirements.

It is of *small* Importance to us what such or such a Man *does* or *says*—or what Notions the World may entertain of *outside* Appearances.—*Is the Gospel true?*—If it be, (as it *surely* is) then the ill Lives, Negligences, or Ignorance of *others*, will be no more an Excuse for *our* Disobedience, than the Extravagance of *another* in spending the Means of *his* Subsistence, would be a Relief to *us*, if we had been so indiscreet as to spend *our own*.

The too *general* Disuse therefore of FAMILY PRAYER, cannot afford even the least *Shadow* of a Pretence to countenance our Neglect of it. Consult the Scriptures, and emulate the *heroick* Resolution of the *brave Joshua*, when he said, even upon the Supposition of his being deserted by the whole Nation, “*As for ME, and MY House,*
“*WE will serve the Lord.*” Josh. xxiv. 15.—We will faithfully *retain*, *assert*, and *adorn* Religion.—Surely this ought to be the *sincere* Resolution, and *constant* Practice, of every Christian Master or Mistress of a Family.—Without this, none can *reasonably* expect to have *dutiful* Children, or *faithful* Servants—nor *justly* hope to have God’s Blessing in *this* World, or his Favour and Acceptance in *that* which is to come.—The Depravity of that World, in which we are about to enter, and the various Temptations and Dangers, which we are unable to foresee or prevent, may well suggest to us the great Propriety of imploring the *Grace*, *Protection*, and *Blessing* of God before we go abroad; and will also afford a
very

very strong Argument for *uniting* our Petitions for it, as a *Family*, if Providence gives us an Opportunity.

It remains to be observed likewise (in order to render the Influence of Family Prayer more lasting and extensive) that were all the Members of every Family frequently and *seriously* to recollect, that they are *daily* to join together in the solemn Worship of the living God, and to beg for each other the Fulness of all heavenly Blessings, the previous and constant Expectation of being so engaged, would help to prevent bitter Words, to suppress all Instances of Unkindness, and to unite their Hearts in Love, *that their Prayers be not hindered*, 1 Pet. iii. 7.

And let it be recollected, upon every proper Occasion, that to *intercede* for each other, either as a Family, or as a Community in general (how little soever it may now be regarded) is one of the most important Acts of Christian Charity; the Means of bringing down upon *others*, Blessings from on high, and of filling *our own* Hearts with extensive and brotherly Love.—It is also an Act of spiritual Charity, which the *poorest* are so capable of *exercising*, that they may be *even rich* in intercessionary Alms; and surely *none* can allow themselves to despise *such* Alms, since the *chiefest* of the Apostles, *most earnestly* and frequently * solicited them.

Having now made what Remarks I proposed on *Forms* of Prayer, and on the Duty and Benefit of *Family* Prayer, I think it necessary to add (as without a conscientious Performance of *this*, in vain will be all my other Directions) some further Remarks on Prayer in *general*.

No Man living from the highest to the lowest, whether he be learned or unlearned, can have a reasonable Excuse for the entire Omission of daily Prayer to God; since the Refusal of such Homage, is to act contrary to the Example and Command of Christ, and in Effect to disown his Power over us; his Goodness to us; his Justice to punish Transgressions; and to question his Faithfulness in fulfilling his Promises.

Nor is PRAYER to be considered merely as a Tribute which we owe to God, but as the Means likewise of deriving

* See Rom. xv. 30.—Col. iv. 12.—1 Tim. ii. 1.

*Strength and Comfort to our own Souls.—And a sincere Christian (one duly concerned for his spiritual Health) would no more think of omitting Prayer To-day, because he practised it Yesterday, than of abstaining from Food To-day, because he Yesterday took it at the proper Season. The regular Returns of either may indeed be omitted on some very urgent Occasion, when the Honour of God, and the Good of our Fellow-Creatures plainly require our immediate Attendance on some other Service; but the spiritual Life can no more be maintained in a long and frequent Neglect of the one, than the natural Life can be in that of the other.—“Our
“Wants are daily; and the Temptations, which draw our
“Hearts from God to the Things of this World, are daily;
“and, upon both these Accounts, our Prayers ought also to
“be daily*.”*

PRAYER is indeed generally acknowledged by all, who profess any Regard to Religion, to be a necessary and essential Part of it.—“Sit ye here, says our blessed Saviour, while I go pray yonder.” (*Matt. xxvi. 36.*) Peter, James, and John, were three good Men, but Christ bid them tarry while he went aside for private Prayer. There are indeed Seasons, when the Christian would not be willing that the dearest Friend he had in the World should be with him, to hear and understand what passes between God and himself.—Prayer too must at certain Seasons be performed with peculiar Solemnity, in which, Fitness of Time and Place are no less to be attended to, than in those of our ordinary Calling.—Indeed, the Zeal of the true Christian should always be tempered with Modesty and directed by Prudence. Moreover, Prayer should be considered as an excellent Means of obtaining an End, yet more noble and valuable than itself:—For the chief Design of Prayer is, that we may procure the Grace of God,—to subdue our corrupt Affections, and to enable us to live in this evil World, as Candidates for a much better.—If it produces not these Effects, it is only a Lip-Labour, a Tree without Fruit, a specious Self-Deceit.

* See Dr. Gibson's (Bishop of London) Treatise on Family-Devotion.

DIRECTION III.

Read carefully every Day some Part of the Holy Scriptures.

WHEN your Prayers in the Morning are ended, if your Time will permit, improve yourself by reading some Portion of the Holy Scripture, or hearing it read; and that you may the better profit by it, beg the Blessing of God in the following Prayer, or some * other to the same Effect.

“ O LORD GOD, who hast given thy Word to be a
 “ Lanthorn to my Feet, and a Light to my Path : Give
 “ me also the Assistance of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that from
 “ the same Word, I may learn thy Will and my Duty,
 “ and so direct my Course, as shall most promote
 “ thy Glory and my own Salvation, thro’ JESUS CHRIST
 “ our Lord. *Amen.*”

When you read, or hear the Bible read by others, let it be with Reverence : Attend to it, not as the Word of Men, but of GOD ; of that GOD, who will regard such as are poor in Spirit, have a contrite Heart, and tremble at his Word : Let this then be always your Frame, and it will so awaken your Fear and Attention, that you will be ever profited, and long retain it.

Be sure likewise, that you are solicitous to learn your Duty. The new-born Babe desires the Milk of the Breast, that he may grow by it; and in like Manner, will you desire the sincere Milk of the Word, if you are a Child of GOD.—Every Time you read, be careful to apply the Commandments for your Direction, the Threatnings to deter you from Sin, or to humble you, and the Promises for your Comfort and Encouragement.

Take Heed, likewise, that you credit the Truth : Look upon every Word in that sacred Book, as true and certain, and as what shall, in its due Time, be accomplished, or has already happened. Thus believe in the LORD your GOD, and so you shall be established ; believe

* See the second Collect for *Advent*, in the Common-Prayer-Book.

his Prophets and Apostles, and so you shall prosper : But if the Word of God, be not regarded with such a Faith, you may read it eternally, and it will be of no Service to you.

In this divine Book you will always find the SAVIOUR is exalted, the Sinner is humbled, and Holiness is promoted : I must therefore earnestly intreat you to examine frequently and thoroughly, your Principles and Practices by these Rules ; which will be equally certain to you, as the Touch-Stone on which Gold is tried, is to the Goldsmith : For unless you perceive, that the Doctrines you have embraced tend to exalt the SAVIOUR, to humble the Sinner, and to promote Holiness ; or if they tend to it, unless they have that Influence on your Practice, you may be very sure, that your Knowledge is not saving, and that you have hitherto read in vain.

Thus *statedly* I would have you, if possible, to read some * Portion of the Holy Scripture Morning and Even-

* Particularly read some of these Instances of the Life of Christ, which I have here transcribed from Mr. *Barkitt's Exposition* on the New Testament, at the Close of his Remarks on St. *John's* Gospel ; where all, who have the Book itself in their Possession, may find proper Comments on each of the following Heads.

- I. His early Piety. See *Luke* ii. 46, 47.
- II. His Obedience to his earthly Parents. See *Luke* ii. 15.
- III. His unwearied Diligence in doing Good. See *Acts* x. 38.
- IV. His Humility and Lowliness of Mind. See *Matt.* xi. 29.
- V. The Unblameableness and Inoffensiveness of his Life and Actions. See *Matt.* xix. 27.
- VI. His eminent Self-Denial. See *Phil.* ii. 7, 8.
- VII. His Contentment in a low and mean Condition in this World. See *Luke* ix. 58. *Phil.* iv. 11.
- VIII. His frequent Performance of the Duty of private Prayer. See *Mark* i. 35. *Luke* vi. 12.
- IX. His affectionate Performance of the Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving. See *Matt.* xi. 25. *John* xi. 41.
- X. His Compassion towards those who are miserable, and in Distress. See *Matt.* xx. 34.
- XI. His spiritual, entertaining, and useful Discourse. See *Luke* xiv. 7.---xxiv. 13.
- XII. His free, familiar, sociable Behaviour. See *Matt.* xi. 29. *Luke* v. 29.

Evening; but if this cannot be done in the Morning (as I know that in the Winter it cannot by many Day-Labourers, and others, who must quit their Houses in the Dark, and leave their Families in Bed) yet in the Evening there will certainly be an Opportunity; and if you delight in the Law of God, as you ought to do, you will as certainly embrace it; and not only then, but at all other Times of the Day, when such happy Seasons offer themselves.—And you might select a Text of Scripture, and get it by Heart, in order to meditate on it next Morning as you work. That you may seize such Occasions, I shall give you *two important Directions* as the principal Furtherances of every religious Duty; and without a due Observance of which, all my *other Directions* must be ineffectual.

1. Watch.—2. Redeem Time.

1. You must WATCH *before, in, and after* every Duty. *Before*, to prevent Impediments, to take Opportunities, and to mark Occurrences that may fit you for it:—*In* the Duty, you must watch against Carelessness, and wandering Thoughts:—And *after* the Duty, you must mark what Improvements you make; whether you grow in Wisdom and Grace, or whether the Duty is not barren and unfruitful.

2. You must also *redeem Time*.—Remember *Time* is precious, and if lost is irrecoverable. Every Friend, and every Thing, will be apt to be stealing *this* from you, therefore it behoves you to be very careful of it—That you may be so, ask yourself every Morning soon after

XIII. His Patience under Sufferings and Reproaches. See 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

XIV. His Readiness to forgive Injuries. See Luke xxiii. 34.

XV. His laying to Heart the Sins, as well as Sufferings, of others. See Mark iii. 5.

XVI. His Zeal for the publick Worship of God. See John ii. 17.

XVII. His glorifying his Father in all he did. See John xvii. 4.

XVIII. His Impartiality in reproving Sin. See Matt. xxiii. 23.

XIX. His universal Obedience to his Father's Will, and cheerful Submission to his Father's Pleasure. See Matt. xxvi. 39.

XX. His Love and Practice of universal Holiness both in Heart and Life. See Luke iv. 34.

you rise, the following Questions, and make Memorandums * accordingly.

1. What Business have I to do this Day, and in what Order?

2. What Opportunities can I this Day contrive for doing Good to others, or for improving myself?

3. What Temptations am I likely to encounter, and in what Instances have I lately failed?

Remember *Punctuality* is the very Life of Business; and though, strictly speaking, not a Virtue, yet, from its great Use, very nearly allied to one; and sure I am, that most of the Inconveniencies in Life arise from the Breach of it.

D I R E C T I O N IV.

Meditate daily upon the Word, and Works
of God.

BEfore I proceed upon this Subject, it will be proper to caution the Reader, that it is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary, at proper Seasons, to set our Thoughts upon the Concerns of this Life: The Works of our Callings are what GOD has appointed us to do; and which, being followed in a holy Moderation in Obe-

* In the Affairs of *this* World, it is of known Use to make *Memorandums* of the several Businesses to be transacted every Day. --- In our *spiritual* Life it would be of no less Utility carefully to examine into our Minds, and imprint on them, what (if the Expression may be allowed me) I would call our particular Business with God; that is to say, what we more especially and immediately want with God.—For my own Part, it has long been a Custom with me to ask myself (either in my Chamber, or as I ride, or walk) “*What Business have I this Day with God?*” namely, What Mercies have I to acknowledge? What Helps and Assistances to implore? What Sins to repent? &c. &c. I shall only observe, that the great Advantages of *such a Habit* will be more readily felt than described: I was induced to mention *this* for the Benefit of such sincere Christians, as would be glad of any likely Method to advance their spiritual Improvement; especially at such Times, as they are *unavoidably hindered* from performing the more solemn Devotions of the Closet.

dience to his Commandment, are so far from separating the Heart from him, that they unite it more closely to him. Many ingenious Trades demand the most intense Application of the Mind to become Masters of them, and it is not the *Design of Christianity* to make Men negligent in the Business of their respective Callings: This *may*, this *must* be done, and yet we may be heavenly-minded. "One Thing is needful," and blessed are those who, like Mary in the Gospel, choose that better Part which can never be taken from them.

It being very evident, that the Subject of THIS DIRECTION, (*viz. Meditation upon the Word and Works of GOD*) must comprize every Creature in the World, and every Article of Religion; it cannot be expected, that I should enter into a Detail of the Particulars; it is enough for me to shew, how we may, in this Manner, begin and end the Day with God; and to give Hints of some Subjects, that are more particularly worthy of frequent Contemplation.

In the Morning, before your Devotions, banish all worldly Thoughts as much as possible; and endeavour to *meditate* on religious Subjects, such as the following, which are at all Times proper, but peculiarly so before Prayer*, reading the Scripture, or going to any Place of Worship.

Meditate

* A State of *Thankfulness* is much to be desired and cultivated,—as such a State is the *most pleasing* to Almighty God, the *most ornamental* to our holy Religion, and the *most comfortable* to ourselves. —In order therefore to beget and support this *most amiable* and *delightful* Temper, I would advise you just to read over (either before or after your Devotions) the following HINTS—and contemplate on them, when your Time permits; --- always remembering, that if you find your Heart in a *fit* Frame for religious Meditation, even *that* is just Matter of cheering Reflection and grateful Praise.

I. MEDITATIONS ON MERCIES PAST.

Preservations from the Dangers of the Night, as Fire,—Tempests, ---Robbery,---Murder,---pernicious Dreams, by which some have been terrified to Distraction, and in which others have even destroyed themselves.

Refresh-

Meditate on the unspeakable Glory of the great GOD, and your own exceeding Sinfulness, that you may confess your Transgressions with deep Humiliation, and pray with Reverence and godly Fear.

Meditate on the Blood of CHRIST, which was shed to obtain all heavenly Blessings for you; and on his powerful Intercession at his FATHER's right Hand, (see *Heb. iv. 14.*) in Behalf of all those who come unto GOD by him.

Call to Mind, and treasure up in your Memory, some of those exceeding precious * *Promises*, which GOD has made to encourage your Prayers and establish your Faith. — Thus give GOD your first Thoughts, that he may possess the chief Part in your Heart; and this will estrange it from worldly Impediments, and fit you for every holy Duty.

For the rest of the Day, it will be extremely proper to meditate, sometimes upon the Nature of GOD, his Attributes, his Love to us in sending his only begotten SON that we might live through him; the Love of

Refreshment of Sleep,---or comfortable Supports from GOD, during a *restless* Night.

How many have spent the Night in Prisons.---How many in *excessive* Pain of Body, or *inexpressible* Anguish of Mind, weary of their Beds, and their Lives.

2. MEDITATIONS ON MERCIES PRESENT.

Cheerfulness of the Sun; or Contrivance of *artificial* Lights to supply its Absence.---All Manner of comfortable Conveniences, at least "Food and Raiment, and the *Necessaries* of Life, where-
"with you should learn of the Apostle to be content." 1 Tim. vi. 8.

3. MEDITATIONS ON MERCIES FUTURE.

The Prospect of spending another Day usefully; and in the desirable Society of your Relations, or intimate Friends; and the Hope of more effectually securing the Favour of GOD, through the Mediation of Christ, and a happy Immortality, for which you are a *Probationer*.---Whereas many were summoned last Night, from their Bodies, to appear before GOD.

* Some of these PROMISES you may meet with in the following Scriptures, *viz.* *Psaln* l. 15.---*Matt.* xxi. 22.---*John* xvi. 23.---*1 Tim.* iv. 8.---*2 Pet.* i. 4.---*Heb.* vi. 7.---I have not inserted them *at length*, as you will receive still greater Benefit from reading them *carefully* in your Bible.

CHRIST, his Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, the infinite Value of his Sufferings, and the Benefits we receive from him, as our Mediator; the sending of the HOLY GHOST, and his Work in sanctifying the Hearts of Believers.—Often it will be proper to think of the Excellence of the Soul, the Turpitude or Baseness of Sin, the Beauty of Holiness, the Certainty of Death, the Terrors of Judgment, the Torments of Hell, and the Joys of Heaven.—These, and the wonderful Proofs of God's Care and Regard for us, ought frequently to be the Subject of our Reflections.

If we turn our Thoughts from the *Word* to the *Works* of GOD, every Creature will furnish us with a Theme; and we may frame an excellent Meditation on it, if we reflect on its Qualities, its Use, the Benefit we receive from it, and the particular instructive References made to many of them in the Book of GOD: But then you must be sure not to dwell upon it only as a *Virtuoso*, to gratify your rational Curiosity; but like a *Christian*, call Religion to the Feast, and make a spiritual Improvement. No Man can want an Instructor, if he wants not a Heart: The very Sheep will teach him Patience, the Dog Faithfulness, the Serpent Wisdom, and the Dove Innocence; the Ant and the Bee will reprove him for his Sluggishness, and the Ox and the Ass correct him for his Ignorance.

While you are undressing, and by Degrees laying aside every Garment, consider of how little Importance it is, of what Materials those Garments are made, so long as they answer the Uses and Demands of Nature.—The same Nature also requires, at certain Seasons, the most superb Apparel of the Great to be put off, and leaves *their* Bodies little more to boast of than your own.—When you are doom'd to lie down in the Grave, all such Trifles must be laid aside; and when you are again called to rise, other Cloathing and other Ornaments will be required, without which, both Body and Soul will continue naked and miserable to all Eternity. In the Apostle's Phrase, *to put on CHRIST*, and to be united to *him*, is your only Security: For he is the Way, and
the

the Truth, and the Life, and no Man can come unto the FATHER but by him. He is the Door into the Sheepfold, by which alone you can enter, there being none other Name given among Men whereby you must be saved. How ought you then to be continually found in the Exercise of every Grace, which may make it to you CHRIST to live, and Gain to die. Such as,

1. Sincere Repentance for your past Sins.
2. Stedfast Faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and a thankful Remembrance of his dying Love.
3. Love to Mankind of all Ranks, and of every Denomination.
4. Resignation to the divine Will, and universal Obedience to it.

These will be Ornaments indeed, clear Proofs that you have “put off the old Man with his Deeds;” and if you are fully satisfied of *this*, Sleep or Death will be equally elligible: So that you will be able to say with *David*, “into thy Hands I commend my Spirit; for “thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of “Truth.” *Psalms xxxi. 6.*

If you awake in the Night, and cannot compose yourself again to Rest; or if the Severity of any Disorder should keep you from Sleeping, I hope you will endeavour to sooth your Anguish, and beguile the tedious, or rather, improve the important Hours, by following the Prescription which the divine Physician for all our spiritual Maladies, has sent us by the Hand of his Servant, namely, “If any be afflicted, let him pray—like *David*, remembering your GOD in your Bed, and meditating upon “him in the Night-Watches.” *Bible Psalms lxi. 6.*

These Verses likewise, which were purposely composed for the Use of the Sick, and are more immediately calculated for those, who are in such afflictive Circumstances than is usually to be found in printed Collections, may serve at any Time, if committed to Memory, as a profitable Amusement and Meditation; especially when they cannot rest, or happen to awake in the Night.

1. *MY* God, with grateful Heart I'll raise
 A daily Altar to thy Praise ;
Thy friendly Hand my Course directs,
Thy watchful Eye my Bed protects.
2. *When Dangers, Woes, or Death are nigh,*
Past Mercies teach me where to fly ;
The same Almighty Arm can aid,
Now Sickness grieves, and Pains invade.
3. *To all the various Helps of Art,*
Kindly thy healing Power impart ;
*BETHESDA'S BATH * refus'd to save,*
Unless an Angel bless'd the Wave.
4. *All Med'cines act by thy Decree,*
Receive Commission all from thee ;
And not a Plant which spreads the Plains,
But teems with Health when Heav'n ordains.
5. *Clay and Siloam's Pool † we find,*
At Heaven's Command restor'd the Blind ;
Hence Jordan's ‡ Waters once were seen,
To wash a Syrian Leper clean.
6. *But grant me nobler Favours still,*
Grant me to know, and do thy Will ;
Purge my foul Soul from every Stain,
And save me from eternal Pain.
7. *Can such a Wretch for Pardon sue !*
My Crimes, my Crimes, arise to View !
Arrest my trembling Tongue in Pray'r,
And pour the Horrors of Despair.
8. *But oh ! regard my contrite Sighs,*
My tortur'd Breast, my streaming Eyes ;
To me thy boundless Love extend,
My God, my Father, and my Friend.
9. *These lovely Names, I ne'er could plead,*
Had not thy Son vouchsaf'd to bleed ;

* See John v. 4. † John ix. 7. ‡ 2 Kings v. 10.

His Blood procures for Adam's Race,
Admittance to the Throne of Grace.

10. *When Vice hath shot its poison'd Dart,
And conscious Guilt corrodes the Heart;
His Blood is all-sufficient found,
To draw the Shaft, and heal the Wound.*

11. *What Arrows pierce so deep as Sin?
What Venom gives such Pains within?
Thou great Physician of the Soul!
Rebuke my Pangs, and make me whole.*

12. *Oh! if I trust thy sov'reign Skill,
With due Submission to thy Will,
Sickness, and Death, shall both agree,
To bring me, LORD, at last, to THEE.*

Thus I have given you my Thoughts on the Duty of Meditation, and on some of the Subjects most proper for it. I have only further to add, when you are meditating, let your Thoughts be intent: Keep to one Subject till your Heart be affected with it. If you think of GOD, cease not to think of him till you admire and adore: If you think of his Omniscience and Omnipresence, double your Watch over yourself; if of his Mercy, have a just Indignation against yourself for Abuses of it; if of his Justice, tremble before him. If you meditate on CHRIST, make no End till Love has melted your Heart; if on his Death, apply the Virtue of it for your own Redemption. If you think of the Evil of Sin, stop not till your Heart abhors it; if of the Strictness and Rectitude of the divine Law, awe your Soul to Obedience. Without this practical Recollection, your Meditations will rather chill than warm your Devotion; but thus improved, they will add Life and Strength to your religious Exercises.

DIRECTION V.

Converse frequently on religious Subjects *, and, for that Purpose, be particularly careful in the Choice of your Company, and in keeping a strict Guard over your Tongue.

THAT your Conversation may be edifying to yourself and others, be watchful to prevent its turning on idle or improper Topics ; and, in order to prevent

* The following Hints, will shew the Use of writing down suitable Materials for Conversation with the Afflicted. As for Instance we may observe, that Afflictions are appointed by the Wisdom and Goodness of God, which is an Argument for Resignation and Comfort---remark the Example of *Eli*, *Job*, and *Christ*---urge that Afflictions are designed as Blessings---that God is out of Kindness severe---If it be objected that Affliction is *peculiarly* calamitous ; it may be answered, GOD, the unerring GOD, prescribed it, and *therefore* it is proper. If it be inquired what Benefits arise from it ?---We may reply that it weans us from the World---and may bring us to Christ, after whom while on Earth, not the Rich and Gay, but the Poor and Afflicted, sought, and still seek---that Christ has Pardon of Sin, the Gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal Life to bestow--- that we should therefore be frequent in Prayer---recommend this by the Examples of *Daniel*, *David*, and *Hannah*---assert that Prayer will not tend to deject, but to elevate the Mind---advise Cheerfulness---observe that this Disposition under Misfortunes, or a Release from them, is not to be obtained by the Visits of worldly Company ; but by Prayer and consulting the Scriptures, that Treasury of Comfort---that earthly Friends cannot give it---that God is both able and willing to bestow that Peace which the World, and worldly Things, cannot give ;---a Peace which surpasses all Understanding, and without which the greatest Monarch on Earth is an Object, not of Envy, but of our Compassion.---After the same Manner we may make Memorandums of suitable Heads for conversing on other religious Subjects, as for Instance, with a presumptuous or desponding Sinner---or else with one of a curious Disposition, to Him we might discourse on the Wisdom of God, shewn by the Wonders discoverable by the Microscope in the minute Creation.

See the celebrated Dr. *Lucas's* little Tract (Price Two-Pence) on the Influence and Regulation of Conversation---Lord, *teach us to pray* (Luke xi. 1.) was the Request of one of the Disciples.---Lord, teach us to *converse* judiciously and effectually, should be the *hourly* Petition of every Christian, as *Conversation* is so powerful an Instrument of Good or Evil.

it, the best Guard will be an Introduction of some religious Subjects, where it can be done with Propriety, the Particulars of which, being as numerous as those for heavenly Contemplation, I need not name.—The Things most worthy of your Meditation, are most worthy of your Discourse, and of those I have already taken Notice; only as I there gave you a Caution previous to your *Meditations*, I will here add some others with Regard to the Government of your Tongue in general, which I must beg of you carefully to observe; seeing, says St. *James*, “if any Man pretends to be religious, and bridles not his Tongue, that Man’s Religion is vain.”

First, Let the glorious Names of Almighty God never be mentioned, unless on weighty and just Occasions; and even then, let your Heart always be affected with the most serious Consideration of that eternal Being before whom you speak. God is highly dishonoured, when his Name is banded to and fro in ordinary Conversation, without due Respect of his incomprehensible Greatness.

Secondly, When you speak of your Neighbour speak all the *Good* you know of him truly and readily, whether he be Friend or Foe; yet always behind his Back, rather than before his Face.—If any Thing *evil*, or derogatory to his Character must be published, be sure you speak not by Hear-say, but according to your personal Knowledge; nor even then, without a lawful Calling, as when you are summoned before a Magistrate to bear Witness to the Truth, or when Hurt has arisen, or may arise to others from the Evil; or when you know of any one who has Authority to redress it. In such Cases, and to such Persons, we ought to speak of the Evil we know of our Neighbours, but not otherwise. To uncover the Nakedness of our Brethren, without a just Calling, is extremely unlawful, and exceedingly pernicious: It always begins in Self-Love, and ends in Contention.—An impertinent Meddling in the Concerns of others, is a direct Breach of that admirable Rule of the Apostle’s, *study to be quiet, and mind your own*
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Business, 1 Theff. iv. 11.—And it is well known what violent Animosities, furious Resentments, and implacable Hatreds arise from a Disregard to it. — Indeed, where you have Authority, apprehend it may be well received, or are in any Degree personally concerned, it will be quite proper to tell your Neighbour himself of his Faults : Our LORD's Rule is,—*If thy Brother sin against thee, reprove him ; and if he repent, forgive him.*

Thirdly, When you speak of yourself, let it be modestly, without Vanity or Boasting. Never praise yourself without absolute Necessity, as when you are unjustly traduced, or in Defence of your own Innocence : It would, however, be imprudent to speak any Thing which tends to your own Disadvantage, or blaze about your own Faults. Briefly, let your Speech be sincere, honest, and edifying : Let it be fitted to the Time, the Place, the Occasion, and him with whom you converse ; and let it tend to the Glory of God, the Disparagement of Sin, and the Defence of good Men and good Things ; and it will be an Argument to others of a gracious Heart, well stored with Wisdom and replenished with Virtue.

Flee every Temptation which is likely to draw you into Sin ; and weigh well, and often, the Precept given by St. *John*, as a tender Father to his dear Child, under that beautiful and expressive Phrase, “ *Little Children* “ (too apt to be pleased with every Trinket and Toy) “ *Keep yourselves from Idols ;*” not only from *those* of the *Heathens*, but from every Sort which might alienate your Regard from God. Every Allurement, by which the Devil intices you to Sin, such as Riches, Honour, Pleasures, Company, and Sensualities of any Kind, are the several *Idols* (Toys or Trinkets) which he presents as the Objects of Admiration and Worship : It is just the same to him *which* you take. Whatever draws off your Affections from God, will *equally* answer his Ends. His Temptation of CHRIST is represented to us under the Device of shewing him all the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them, as we read in *Matt.* iv. 8, 9.—Be ever observant therefore of the Directions
here

here given, and then none of these *Idols* can have Access to your Heart.

DIRECTION VI.

Be frequent in the Examination of yourself, especially before Prayer, that you may fully know your Offences, and be truly humbled for them.

SUCH as have Leisure, would do well to try themselves by the *longer* Form of Self-Examination, occasionally, or by its *Abridgement*, every Evening.—Such as are in a frequent Hurry, and subject to the Authority of others, using the same Method as often as they *conveniently* can. Conscience will answer all the Questions here stated in a *few Minutes*, and to these, such others may be added as any one's Station in Life, or particular Circumstances, may require.—Those who can write, I would advise to remark, on a Slip of Paper, the Sins of which they find themselves guilty. Such Sins should be reviewed by Way of Caution, penitently lamented, prayed, and striven against; and God should be thanked, with the utmost Gratitude, that he still permits a longer State of Trial or Probation. But particularly write down the *Reasons* which at *any Time* make you afraid to die; consider them well, and opposite to them write down the proper Methods to prevent such Fears *for the future*; and the best Arguments you can get to fortify yourself against them at the *present Time*.—Consult likewise, some experienced Christian, if you have such a Bosom Friend, in whom you can entirely confide.

Self Examination is a most important Duty, as it acquaints us with our own Hearts.—Never, therefore, examine yourself slightly, and only as a Thing of Course, but always remember that this Examination is made in the Presence of the all-seeing God; and that you may be instantly summoned, by sudden Death, before his Tribunal, there to have your *Sincerity* tried.

* Heads of Self-Examination.

As to the Breaches of your Duty towards God, your Neighbour, and yourself.

I. Duties towards God.

ABRIDGEMENT.

1. **D**O I sincerely believe in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost?—Have I the *same Faith* in my Heart which I profess in my Lips?—Do I live in an *habitual* Sense of God's continual Presence with me; and am I careful to obey him to the utmost of my Power?—Do I acknowledge myself accountable to him for all my Thoughts, Words, and Actions; my Repentance, or Obstinacy; my Belief, or Disbelief; my Obedience, or Disobedience?

2. Do I hold myself obliged to worship God both *in publick* and *in private*?—Do I take a *Delight* in my Duty, and perform it *daily*, as often as I have Opportunity?—Do I *regularly* comply with his holy Ordinances; particularly that of receiving the blessed Sacrament?—Do I gratefully acknowledge the great Works of my

* This longer Form of Self-Examination should be frequently and well considered, especially every *Sunday*; and the Abridgement is intended to be learned by Heart, as it may be serviceable to the Patients in an Infirmary, when they *cannot* make Use of this Book, or to others, when they have no Leisure to enter into a *longer*, and *more particular* Examination. A Method even shorter than *this*, may be used when much pressed in point of Time; namely, by dividing the Day into four Parts, the *Morning*,---the *Forenoon*,---the *Afternoon*,---and the *Evening*---considering briefly, but very attentively, what the Behaviour has been in each of them.---This I would call a *mental Self-Examination*; and we shall be able, with great Expedition to recollect our Failings, under the same general Heads of Duty to God, Neighbour, and Self.---But we should not content ourselves with this *short mental* Examination, when there is Leisure and Opportunity for doing it more at large.

Creation, Preservation, Redemption, and Sanctification?—Do I make the Will of God the *Rule* of my Actions; and do I contentedly submit to *that* under all Circumstances of Life?

3. Am I zealous for God's Honour; and do I shew a due Reverence to his holy Name?—Am I guilty of no Profaneness, Cursing, or Swearing, nor any Way encourage it in others; but, on the contrary, discountenance it as much as in my Power?—Do I prefer Things *temporal* to Things *eternal*, and seek, by the whole of my Conduct, to advance the Glory of God?—Have I no Anxiety, or Murmurings, with Regard to the Things of this Life, and do I rest contented in that State wherein it has pleased God to place me?—Do I not presume too much on God's Mercy through Christ (so as to go on in wilful Sins) nor upon any Occasion distrust his *Providence*, or fatherly Care of me?

II. Duties towards my Neighbour.

ABRIDGEMENT.

1. Have I not provoked my Neighbour by any proud, surly, contemptuous, and ill-natured Speeches, or Actions?—Have I not injured him by flandering, lying, deceiving, or defrauding him upon any Occasion?—Have I endeavoured to take away his good Name, or lessen his Character and Reputation.—2. Should I rejoice at any Evil which might befall him?—Do I *secretly* wish his Death, or any Harm or Loss to happen to him?

2. Have I endeavoured to tempt, or draw him into Sin, by any *indecent*, or *evil Example* which I have shewn?—Do I truly or sincerely wish for his Welfare both spiritual and temporal, and, as Opportunity serves, attempt to promote it?—Do I give them proper Admo-

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nition,

nitions, and *friendly Advice*, whenever I see them stand in Need of these, or judge that such might be useful, and can be given with Propriety, or do I receive the *like Advice* kindly from him?—Do I make Amends for any Injuries I have done him designedly, or by Accident; and have I *true Compassion* and Concern for him when under any Affliction or Want; and do I endeavour to help and relieve him to the utmost of my Power?

3. Do I heartily forgive all the Injuries I have ever received from him? and do I sincerely desire and endeavour to live at Peace and Friendship with *him*?—If he continues in Enmity* with me, do I pray to God for him, and find in myself a sincere Disposition to return Good for Evil?

III. Duties towards myself.

ABRIDGEMENT.

1. Am I, in my Conversation, vain-glorious, subject to Passion, and easily provoked;	1. Do I strive to subdue, and pray earnestly against all irregular De-
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* One of the most illustrious, but, at the same Time, one of the *most difficult* of the Christian Duties, is “To love our Enemies; and to pray for the Welfare and Amendment of them who do spitefully use and persecute us.”—As therefore Love and Charity towards all such, is so repeatedly and strongly enjoined us by our Lord, we are under an *indispensable* Obligation to comply with it; and if we duly observe this Precept, we shall soon find the beneficial Effects of it.—But let none imagine that this Injunction is meant to produce Insensibility. Our Creator has endued the human Mind with a Sense of *Resentment*, as the necessary Means of Self-Preservation. This limits the *Use* of Anger;—any farther Extension is the *Abuse* of it.—“Be ye angry and sin not.” *Violent Wrath*, with its usual Attendant *Malice*, is a most dangerous spiritual Malady; the peculiar Remedy for which, is fervent Prayer; and happiness in the Power of every one. This is equally salutary with regard to him who gives, and him who receives, a Provocation. The Injurer of his Neighbour, and the Self-Avenger, should alike be considered as spiritually diseased; and both are, consequently, Objects of *Compassion*, rather than of *Hatred*.—Prayer for our Enemy is the Means to obtain the Grace of God for his Conversion; and, at the same Time to preserve our own Breast serene, and out of Danger from any Infection from our Intercourse with him. It is not only a necessary Act of Obedience to our Blessed Saviour’s express Command, but it is the strongest Proof, that “we are not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good.”

or do I preserve a Decency, Modesty, and Humility, without over-valuing myself, or despising others upon any Occasion?

2. Am I diligent in my Business, or Calling; and do I employ my spare Time innocently, and, to the best of my Power, usefully to myself and others?—Am I contented with my Condition, free from covetous Desires, or envious Repinings at the Prosperity of others?—Do I not indulge myself in any blameable Excess; but am I careful to keep myself temperate and chaste, not only in *Act*, but in *Word*, and even in *Thought*?—Do I not indulge myself in unnecessary Sleep, and in needless* Amusements,

fires, and evil Affections; endeavouring to lead a sober, righteous, and godly Life; and doing all the Good I can?

—2. Am I more intent upon securing my eternal Happiness, than upon any of the Pursuits, or Advantages of this World? And 3. Am I now in that State I would chuse to be found at the Approach of Death?

* As some in *higher* Ranks of Life than those for whom these DIRECTIONS were *immediately* intended, may probably look into it, I think it not improper, for their Sakes, to add, that I am very sensible, not only of the *Innocence*, but *Expediency* of AMUSEMENTS, when well chosen and moderate, when used not merely “to pass away TIME,” but to unbend the Mind, or give Ease and Health to the Body; and thus render us more fit for *profitable* Employments:—Therefore I would, by no Means, have this Question so understood as condemning Amusements *in general*, or insinuating, that CHRISTIANITY and CHEERFULNESS were inconsistent with each other.---My Design is only to guard against *excessive* Indulgencies of this Kind;---against turning them into the *principal Business* of Life, instead of admitting them by Way of *Recreation*.---And since it is not uncommon, even for such as are in the main *serious*, to squander away too many of their *inestimable* Moments in very Vanity, this Caution cannot be deemed *meddlesome*.---May none of my Readers forget that Time is a Talent, for which we must give Account! That our great Master has expressly commanded us by his Apostle, “TO REDEEM IT:” That it is the Ground-work of *all* religious Improvement, and religious Service:—That to trifle it away, hurts the *Power* of Christianity in our Hearts; as a Worm, at the Root of a Plant, obstructs its Growth, imperceptibly indeed, but effectually, perhaps destructively.

Recreations, or Diversions of any Kind?—Am I not subject to Pride, Ostentation, or Extravagance in my Expences or Apparel?

3. Am I more concerned about, or intent upon the Care of my Body, Estate, or other Affairs of this World, than about the Interests of my Soul and the Security of my eternal Salvation?—What Progress have I lately made in subduing my constitutional Sins?—How have I this Day behaved under any *sudden* Vexation, or Temptation to those Sins which most easily beset me?—Have I well considered that the *World of Spirits* must soon open upon me, perhaps this very Night?—Do I sincerely desire and labour to fit and prepare myself for Death, by repenting of, and forsaking my Sins; and by using all those Means the holy Scriptures teach me, to obtain a Pardon, and to secure the Favour of my great Redeemer?—Do I startle at the Thoughts of a *Separation* of Soul and Body; or can I compose myself in a resigned * Disposition, either to sleep or die?

* This is the Temper which the Believers of old *always* enjoyed, (see 2 Cor. v. i, 2.) and which we should *pray* to obtain; -- remembering that DEATH hath no Power to *hurt* that Soul, which is united by FAITH (see John xvii. 21.) to the great Redeemer, who is supreme Lord of the unseen World; or, (as the Scripture expresses it) “*has the Keys of HELL and of DEATH.*” Rev. i. 18.--- I cannot easily express *this* Temper, which I would be so glad to cultivate and promote, better than in the Words of Cowley.

- “ Be satisfy’d and pleas’d with what Thou art ;
- “ Act cheerfully and well th’ allotted Part.
- “ Improve the present Hour: Be thankful for the past ;
- “ And neither fear, nor wish th’ Approaches of the last.”

What a cheerful and resigned Spirit is here !--- The Attainment of which will be the greatest Happiness to ourselves; is one of the chief *Ends* of the Christian Religion; the most *amiable*, and, consequently, the most *effectual* Method of recommending it to others. The Archangel MICHAEL, is represented by Milton, as giving the same Kind of Advice to our Progenitor ADAM, alarmed at the painful Passages to Death.

- “ Nor love thy Life, nor hate ; but what thou liv’st,
- “ Live well ; how long, or short permit to Heaven :
- “ And patiently attend thy Dissolution.”

How

How have I discharged, or wherein have I neglected, the Duties required of me, either as a Parent or Child, a Brother or Sister, a Husband or Wife, a Servant or Master?

DIRECTION VII.

Remember * to keep holy the Sabbath Day conscientiously; to join in the publick Worship of God; and particularly to receive the holy Sacrament.

THE Temper of Mind, with which you ought to perform Acts of Devotion, has been already sufficiently expressed in the second Direction; and as in publick Worship, you are diligently to attend to your Minister, and devoutly to accompany him, I need say no more on that Particular: I shall only subjoin Forms suitable to the Occasion.

An introductory Prayer to be used before publick Worship.

GIVE me, O LORD, for CHRIST's Sake, a deep Reverence of thy Presence; and grant me the Aid of thy holy Spirit to help my Infirmities, that in every Attendance on thy Worship, I may aim at thy Glory, and obtain thy Blessing. *Amen.*

A concluding Prayer to be used after publick Worship.

PARDON, O LORD, for CHRIST's Sake, the Coldness of my Devotion, and the Wanderings of my Thoughts. Graciously accept my imperfect Services, and enable me to grow wiser and better by every Attendance on thy Worship. *Amen.*

* God has enjoined us to take *particular* Notice of the *fourth* Commandment, by putting the Word REMEMBER before it, since, on the due Observation of *this*, our Disposition and Ability to observe all the other must, in a good Measure, depend.

When you are at the Sacrament, from which I hope you will never absent yourself, you will have a proper Opportunity for using the following Forms without interfering with the Communion Service, if you take this little Treatise with you, and are not possessed of Bishop *Wilson* on the Lord's Supper, or some other judicious Book on the Subject.

Forms to be used immediately *before* receiving the Sacrament.

General Penitition. Vouchsafe, O LORD, to admit me a Sharer in the heavenly Entertainments of thy Children; and may I efficaciously partake of the Bread and Water of Life, of which, whosoever spiritually eats and drinks, lives for ever.

Love. GOD so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten SON, that in him we might have everlasting Life.—May I love him who has thus loved me!—And may I love all his faithful Servants for his Sake, and thus prove myself one of the Children of GOD, and a true Disciple of CHRIST.

Thankfulness. I thank thee, O LORD, and bless thy holy Name, that, after all my Offences against thee, thou art yet pleased to grant me another Opportunity of Communion at thy Table, and to give me, on my sincere Repentance, a fresh Assurance of my Pardon, by the precious Blood of that SON, in whom thou art always well pleased.

Repentance. I acknowledge myself to be deplorably polluted; but thy precious Blood, O blessed Saviour, can cleanse me from all my Sins and Defilement; for which I am unfeignedly penitent. Deal graciously with me, I beseech thee, and forgive, heal, and help me. Make me fit to receive these thy Creatures of Bread and Wine, in Remembrance of thee, to my Profit and Comfort, and my Soul shall bless thy Name for ever.

Faith. LORD, I believe, help my Unbelief!—I cast myself upon thee alone for Salvation: I rely on thy all-sufficient Merits for the Atonement of my

my Sins. Thou hast redeemed me that I might be holy !
 Lord grant that I may experience the Power of thy Death
 for Sin, and work in me a Death unto Sin.

Forms to be used immediately *after* receiving the Sacra-
 ment.

Thanksgiving. Glory be to Thee, O LORD, who hast
 made such gracious Provision for lost and
 undone Mankind ; who hast sent thy SON to die for our
 Sins, and to save us when we had utterly ruined ourselves.
 Glory be to Thee, O CHRIST, who hast loved us, and
 washed us from our Sins in thy own Blood.

Resolutions. Grant me, O LORD, the Aid of thy
 Holy Spirit, that I may walk (as I now
 resolve) like one who has been at thy Table. After I
 have tasted of the Pleasures of thy House, and eaten this
 Bread of Life, I resolve no more to lift up my Heel
 against thee.

Prayer. May I grow in Knowledge and in
 Grace, that my Heart may be weaned
 from Sin and the World, and that I may make it my
 Meat and Drink to do the Will of my Father, who is
 in Heaven. *Amen.*

D I R E C T I O N VIII.

Never think you have made a sufficient Progress
 in Religion, but labour with persevering Di-
 ligence to attain, as far as in you lies, the
 highest Degree of Holiness, in your ap-
 pointed Station.

TO make Men *holy* is the *principal* Design * of Chris-
 tianity, “ the one Thing needful,” not only to save
 them from the Punishment of Sin in Hell, but from the
 Dominion

* See a beautiful and correct Edition (being the fourth) of the
 good Bishop Fowler's *Design of Christianity*, lately printed in Duc-
 decimo, and sold (Price Three Shillings) by Mr. John Rivington,
 in

Dominion of it, even while here on Earth, 1 *John* iii. 8. Let it therefore be *your principal* Care to be in a progressive State of Holiness; being fully sensible, at the same Time, that the complete Obedience and Sacrifice, made for us by that divine Redeemer, “*who although he was* “*found in Fashion as a Man, yet thought it not Robbery to* “*be equal with God, because in him dwelleth the Fulness* “*of God bodily,*” is our only Hope, that any Obedience or Perfection of ours can meet with Acceptance.—God has set *Perfection* in the full View of his Servants:—Not as what they shall immediately attain *, but as what they ought ardently to pursue, by walking in the Light, as He is in the Light, and purifying themselves, as He is pure. While we are *here*, we never arrive to full Maturity: Nor are we all of one Growth; but there are little Children, young Men, and Fathers in Christianity. Hence it is that our Lord compares his Kingdom to a Grain of Mustard-seed, which gradually expands itself into a great Tree.

There are *little Children*, spiritually speaking, just born, hanging, as it were, on the Breast.—These know their heavenly Parent, though they know little else, and call

in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. The Bishop, in this well-known Treatise, has given, as he himself expresses it, “*a plain Demonstration, that the induing Men with inward, real Righteousness (or true Holiness) was the ultimate End of our Saviour's coming into the World, and is the great † Intention of his blessed Gospel.*” —“*What I write (says he in his Preface) is intended to strike at the grand CAUSE of those religious Controversies with which we are continually disturbed, and the pernicious Effects of them, as they are to be imputed to nothing so much, as to the IGNORANCE of, or NON ATTENDANCE to, the Design of Christianity.*”

* That you may make the better Progress in Religion, I would, above all Things, if you have Leisure and Capacity, recommend to you the keeping a DIARY, or daily Account how you employ your Time. This would be of great Use, both with regard to your *spiritual* and *temporal* Concerns.

But if you cannot keep a Diary in so full a Manner as you could wish, yet you may occasionally commit to writing, a few Observations on the State of your Mind, and your Progress or Decline in Religion, which the oftener they are repeated, the greater Advantage you will receive.

† See Titus ii. 14. and 1 *John* iii. 5.

after

after God, though imperfectly, and with a stammering Tongue. They desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow; and yet much gross Ignorance, Folly and Weakness remains in them.—Such Christians are liable to two great Errors. The one is, when they *find* the Comforts of Religion; the other, when they find them *not*. While their Comforts *continue*, they are so much affected, that they are ready to neglect their lawful Callings, as a great Hindrance to their spiritual Exercises; and from this mistaken Zeal, they are apt to be remiss and unprofitable, and to censure others.—When Comfort is *wanting*, they are greatly dejected, so as to give their Christian Associates real Concern, and much Perplexity, how to encourage and support them rationally.—Like unskillful Swimmers out of their Depth, they are continually sinking, and it is difficult to keep their Heads above Water.

Young Men are a Kind of middle Christians; not so well versed in their Christian Warfare as the *Fathers*, nor yet so weak and unexperienced as the *Children*. These may be considered as in the Midst of the Combat against their spiritual Adversaries, as resisting and subduing those unruly Desires and Passions, by which they are, notwithstanding, sometimes overcome.—*Now* the Heart is at Peace; *anon* disturbed by *inward* Suggestions and *outward* Attacks. St. *John* warns them of this, and animates them to the Combat, by assuring them of Victory: “I have written unto you *young Men*, says he, because “ye are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, “and ye have overcome the Wicked One.”

Fathers are such Christians as have long been accustomed to distinguish, and been exercised in discerning Good from Evil.—Such as have long been acquainted with the Duties of Holiness, have obtained Grace of God to walk more comfortably and constantly in the Paths of the Gospel than young Men, or little Children. These being habituated to an heavenly Course, are brought to delight in the Law of the Lord, as the fullest Liberty; so that *they*, compared with other weak Christians, may be called *perfect*, though they are not arrived to a complete Growth.

Their

Their Thoughts and Desires are not always such as they would, but are frequently rebellious, and such as they would not;—and by this Means their best Actions are mixed with Corruption, and their Thoughts favour of the Flesh, that abides in them.

Upon the whole then it is evident, that these several Degrees of Christians have great Need to strive earnestly for higher Perfection. The Apostle St. *Paul*, who was one of the first Rate, expressly says, “ that He did not “ account himself already perfect, but that He pressed “ towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling “ of God in Christ Jesus.” We may therefore conclude, that sinless Perfection cannot be obtained on this Side of the Grave.—Yet while Sin remains, it must be pursued to its Destruction, and Perfection sought after with persevering Diligence.—Every Christian is a Soldier by Profession, and can never be discharged till the Enemy is totally subdued. A Progress in Holiness there must be; and when this is not continued, it is too sad a Sign of Insincerity. Where no Growth is, there is the greatest Reason to suspect that no Life is. The Water which Christ gives his Followers, is a Well of Water, that never ceases bubbling up, till it extends to everlasting Life.

Should you enquire how you must labour to attain Perfection? The Answer is ready—Observe these *eight* spiritual Directions. You’ll remember, in these are the *Means* of Grace.—Labour by these *Means* to perfect every Christian Grace, and to subdue every sinful Habit; for in this consists that Perfection which I am intreating you so earnestly to acquire.—If no Qualifications are necessary to become meet Partakers with the Saints in Light, to what Purpose can you suppose that the Example of Jesus Christ, and the Perfection of your heavenly Father, are proposed for Imitation? Can you believe that God is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and yet can you expect to be received into his Presence in your Sins and Pollutions? Ah! no.—Deceive not yourselves.—None who are impure can enter those happy Mansions;
nor,

nor, if they should, are they capable * of relishing the Bliss that is there enjoyed, as I have already fully observed under my *first Direction*.—No! Heaven must cease to be Heaven, were such its Inhabitants.—These are self-evident Truths.

Consider in what Manner you become capable of enjoying the good Things of this Life. The wise and royal Preacher *Solomon* tells you, and Experience teaches you, that “*the Light is sweet, and a pleasant Thing it is to behold the Sun.*” Yet for this Pleasure you are wholly indebted to that astonishing Piece of heavenly Workmanship, the EYE, and the several Organs peculiarly fitted to receive the Light. Let the EYE be *dis-tempered*, and all Objects, which *in themselves* remain the same, with Regard to you, lose their Beauty and Lustre. Let the EYE be totally lost, then the Sense, which depends upon it, is lost also, and “*the whole Body is full of Darknefs.*”—The most exquisitely delicate Food affords no Relish to a *vitiated Palate*, nor can it sit easy on the *palled Stomach*.—The most enchanting Musick cannot charm either “*the deaf Adder, who stoppeth her Ears,*” or that unhappy Man who has no longer the Use of them.

So it is with the *Soul* un sanctified.—All Traces of the divine Image are defaced, by a Course of Sin.—Such a one sees no Comeliness in the Saviour. He has neither the *Inclination* to desire, the *Means* to obtain, or a Ca-

* Alas! what Delight would it be to a *Swine* to be wrapt in fine Linen, and laid in Odours? His Senses are not gratified by any such Delicacies, nor would he feel any Thing besides the Torment of being with-held from the Mire.—Those *Eyes* which have continually beheld *Vanity*, would be dazzled, not delighted with the *beatific Vision*; neither could that *Tongue*, which has accustomed itself only to *Oaths*, find Harmony in an *Hallelujah*. It is the *peculiar Privilege* of “the pure in Heart to see God.” *Matt. v. 8.*—This is a Quotation from an excellent Book, well deserving the most serious Consideration, and Recommendation of every true Friend to Religion; written by the Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*; and intitled, *The CAUSES of the DECAY of Christian Piety; or, An impartial SURVEY of the Ruins of the Christian Religion, undermined by unchristian Practice.*

capacity to enjoy any of those Blessings (beautiful and heavenly as they are) which God has prepared for those who love Him.

If you therefore are thus sinful, and continue thus, you will be fit only for the Society of those apostate Spirits, to whose Temptations you have yielded, under whose rebellious Banners you have enlisted, and whose Qualities you have imitated; and as you was fit only for their Society, so you must be their Companions in those Regions of Despair and Woe, “*Where the Worm dies not, and the Fire is not quenched.*”—Oh! consider this, ye who forget God, and treasure up Wrath unto the Day of Wrath.—As for you, ye blessed Children of your heavenly Father, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, and earnestly pray to be made more and more like him, proceed with Courage; and make daily Advances in the blessed Path, which you have wisely chosen: “*Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*”



P O S T S C R I P T.

1. **A**S Points of Controversy and Speculation have so frequently been destructive of true Piety, and preventive of that regular Course of Devotion which I have here described; I hope my Readers will pay little if any Regard to them.—I apprehend such Points to be included in the Number of those Questions, which the Apostle has warned us to avoid, *because they engender Strife.*—Such of them as relate to the Counsels, Decrees, or supernatural Operations of the Almighty, which He has not thought fit to reveal, or explain in his written Word, I look upon as the Offspring of a vain and fruitless Curiosity (if not suggested by the Tempter and Enemy of Mankind)

Mankind) and all peremptory Decisions of them as a Compound of human Weakness and Arrogance.—However important such Points may seem to *some*, I am fully satisfied, they are of very little Importance towards the GREAT END of our blessed Saviour's Coming into the World; namely, THE SALVATION OF MAN.—This Persuasion of Mind is *to me* a Preservative against *all religious Doubts*; the great Comfort of which, and the Hope that others may reap the same invaluable Benefit, make it necessary for *me* to be more explicit on this Subject.

2. I must likewise beg Leave to recommend in the strongest Manner, what is indeed in a great Measure the Consequence of my laying no great Stress on controversial Points: I mean, very favourable Thoughts *of*, and *Expressions towards*, those pious and sincere Christians, who differ in their Sentiments concerning the ceremonial Part of Religion, or any Matter not expressly commanded, or clearly revealed in Scripture. This, if not the very Essence of Christian Charity, ought, I am sure, to be inseparably connected with it. However, so far as the *two* Particulars I have here mentioned may be distinguished from each other, I shall submit a few Remarks on each, to the Consideration of my Readers.

1. *First*, As to *controverted* Points, I freely own that my daily Use of the Scriptures, and my steady Attention to them, has greatly abated my Regard to what is *not there* clearly revealed, or *from thence* manifestly deduced; since many Opinions fiercely contended for on one Side, and opposed with the greatest Earnestness and Zeal on the other, seem to *me* (after what has, I hope, been a careful and impartial Examination) rather different in *Appearance*, than in *Substance*, and upon the whole to be, as I have already observed, of very little Signification, or Use in our Way to Heaven. For these Reasons I have studiously avoided whatever might lead to any of those *Controversies*, which have so unhappily divided Christians of different Denominations. The Church of Christ would more illustriously display the Spirit, and conform to the Rules of its blessed Founder, were *these* less studied,

or regarded.—I have too often seen the Understanding so darkened by Prejudice in Favour of precarious Systems, that the clearest, the most important, and invariable Truths of holy Writ, have been made to depend on such particular and doubtful Interpretations, as might best conduce to the Support of those Notions.—A melancholy Proof that the Champions of Controversy labour not so much to form their Plan from Scripture, as to wrest Scripture for the Support of their Plan.

Our divine Master himself has given us an infallible Rule for the Direction of our Judgment, in declaring, that “*the Tree is known by its Fruits;*” and he has taught us by his Apostle, that “*Faith worketh by Love.*”—A due Attention to *this* might certainly prevent a great Number of presumptuous Inquiries, and unnecessary, if not unmeaning, Distinctions. *Faith* may (alas! it will) afford Matter of Controversy: *Hope* will be differently founded; but *Charity* (declared the greatest and most important of the *three*) can admit of no Debate or Doubt; yet whilst Men enter into curious Researches *after*, and endless Disputes *about*, the *two former*, how often do they disregard, and entirely lose Sight of the *last*!—Thus perplexing their Minds, and souring their Tempers “*with vain Janglings,*” to the manifest Detriment of that *vital Holiness*, on which our Peace depends; which it is the *grand End* of the Gospel to promote; and which is the *only Proof* that Men actually *are* what they would be *thought*.

*Ye different Sects, who all declare,
Lo! here is Christ, or Christ is there!
If real Proofs ye mean to give,
Shew me as Christians how ye live.*

It is far from my Design to recommend the particular Tenets of this or that Sett of Men, and I have therefore to the utmost of my Power avoided all *Singularities of Expression*; yet as scarcely any Thing can be advanced, which *some* have not questioned, or made Matter of Dispute, I have referred to such Texts of Scripture, as appear to me evidently to speak the same Sentiments, that

I might, as far as possible, be sheltered under their *sacred Authority* from that censorious and cavilling Disposition, by which some rather seek to distinguish *themselves*, than to serve the common Cause of Religion.

Now should any one imagine that the Disregard I have expressed to the distinguishing Tenets of particular Sects, or Bodies of Men, tends to introduce what are called *Latitudinarian Principles*, and that an Indifference towards any of those implies a Distrust or Contempt of *all*; I would answer, that an Attention to *those Fundamentals*, which the holy Scriptures clearly and necessarily require, and which “*the wayfaring Man may find*,” joined with a due Submission to such Rules as the ecclesiastical or legal Governors of any Society shall prescribe with a View to *Decency and Order only*, will be so far from causing Unsteadiness or Doubt, that it is the strongest Preservative against unsettled Notions in Religion.—Whosoever firmly believes that every Thing necessary to Salvation is so clearly taught in the holy Scriptures, that “*He who runs may read*,” and that whatever remains obscure, (see *Ecclus* iii. 21.) after a diligent and attentive Search, is rather *Matter of Curiosity* than of Use, (deeming as *such*, all disputable Points, wherein Christ and his Apostles have neither made any Decision, nor in express Words, and in the clearest Sense of those Words, required an Assent to those Points) *such a one*, I say, will follow St. Paul’s Advice in avoiding all curious, and unprofitable Questions, and maintain his Peace in the Midst of a wrangling and contentious World.—*This* will be to *Him* the very Ground of Certainty, Satisfaction, and Security: It is indeed building upon a Rock in such a Manner as may defy the Storms of every loud, but impotent Controversy.

2. *Secondly*, As to the favourable Thoughts which I sincerely entertain, and openly profess towards those, whose Opinions are different from each other, or from my own, either relating to Ceremonies, or other Matters not expressly commanded, or clearly revealed in Scripture (by which I more particularly mean those ~~Persons~~ who in *England conform to our ecclesiastical Establishment*, and

those who *dissent* from it) I will only, in few Words, say, that as such a candid Disposition in this State of *Imperfection*, appears to me a necessary and distinguishing Characteristic * of Christianity, I hope, I shall *always* retain, and study to cultivate it.

I am known to be a Member of the Church of *England*, and think I have sufficient Reasons for my Adherence to it.—I look not for Perfection in any Thing of mere human Institution: I am not taught by *Her* to expect it in *her own* Institutions or Decisions.—No!—Permit me to mention it to her Honour, that in her Articles “*She acknowledges the holy Scriptures to be the only Rule of Faith;*

* See these *charitable* Tenets recommended and enforced by Bishop Taylor, on THE LIBERTY OF PROPHECYING; (wherein he shews the *Unreasonableness* of prescribing to another Man's Faith;) and by Dr. Watts in his ORTHODOXY, and CHARITY UNITED.---It is much to be wished that the *first* was abridged, and the *latter* more generally read.---I have likewise the Satisfaction of finding the *same candid* Sentiments inculcated by that eminently good Man, Bishop Fowler, in his Defence of the Principles and Practices of certain moderate Divines of the Church of *England*.---The Bishop concludes this Work with the most earnest Wishes, and fervent Prayers to Heaven, “*That it may please God to guide all our Feet into the Way of Peace; that he would give us teachable Tempers, modest and meek Spirits; and that the Differences in our Sentiments may not have so ill an Influence upon our Minds, as to create UNCHARITABLE Heats, and UNCHRISTIAN Animosities.*---*That we may place our Religion in DOING, rather than in TALKING and DISPUTING.*---*That we may hate a selfish, private Spirit, as unworthy of the Benignity, and Generosity of the Christian Religion;*---and that we may contend with each other about nothing more, than who shall express in the Mists of our different Persuasions, most Charity and most Candour.” And in another Part of his Writings, he makes a Reply, worthy of a Christian Bishop, to a warm Antagonist, who had attacked him unjustly and scurrilously. “*I will do nothing like imitating him in Revilings and Defamations; I have not, I thank God, so learned Christ. St. Paul tells us that Charity shall cover a Multitude of Sins; but what shall cover Uncharitableness with all its bitter Fruits? Not Orthodoxy, be it ever so infallible; nor yet Zeal against Heresy, be it ever so flaming.*”

Can there be a *Christian* who would refuse to join with the Bishop, in such Sentiments, Wishes, and Prayers? Or can there be Words, which better express the *very Essence* of Christianity.

“---does

“ —does not arrogate to herself Infallibility;—nor pronounce
 “ as hopeless, reprobate, and damned, those who are not
 “ within her Pale.” On these Principles is founded my
 invariable Attachment to the established Church; which
 whilst I profess in this public Manner, I scruple not at the
 same Time to declare, that in Good-will, Love, and
 Charity, I account myself, and desire to be esteemed
 the Fellow-Member, and Brother of every real *Chris-
 tian*; by which I would be understood to mean the can-
 didly religious and truly good of all Denominations.
 Let us not forget the Reprimand given by St. Paul to
 the Censurer, in these divine Words, “ *For who art thou*
 “ *that judgest another Man’s Servant? One Man esteemeth*
 “ *one Day above another—another esteemeth every Day alike*
 “ —Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind. He
 “ *that regardeth the Day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he*
 “ *that regardeth not the Day, to the Lord he doth not regard*
 “ *it. And we shall all stand before the Judgment-Seat of*
 “ *Christ.*” Rom. xiv. 4.

But are we obliged to comply with all Tempers or
 Peculiarities contrary to Order, and to our own maturest
 Judgment? I answer—By no means.—I highly honour
 Piety and Virtue, and I most sincerely pity Enthusiasm,
 Error, and Prejudice, wheresoever they appear: Yet
 when I apprehend that *THESE concur*, as they too often
 do, in the same Person, I would no more communicate
 for a Constancy with such in their Public Worship, or be
 incorporated with them, than I would make them the
 Subject of Scoffs and Ridicule: And whilst what I look
 upon as an *Error in Judgment*, is the Object of my *Com-
 passion*, not of my *Resentment*, it shall, by the Grace of
 God, be my constant Endeavour, as it is clearly my
 Duty, “ *if it be possible, and as much as lieth in me, to*
 “ *live peaceably with all Men.*” See Rom. xiii. 18.

C O N T E N T S.

☞ These *eight* SPIRITUAL DIRECTIONS I would advise you, to get by *Heart*, and reflect daily upon what has been further advanced to explain and enforce them. THESE may seem as Burthens and Penances to those whose Hearts are averse to Religion; but if you once attain a Relish for it, they will become, in a Manner, natural to you. Indeed you will scarcely, without Pain to yourself, omit doing what they injoin, so much Delight will you find in their Observance, and so strongly will your Conscience reproach you on the Neglect; for you will *then* clearly see that I have recommended no more to you, than what your ^{Reason} Necessities, your Duty and Gratitude require.—My ~~Duty~~ is purely to habituate your Mind to Religion and Goodness; to introduce, urge, and cultivate that Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, which the Gospel of Jesus Christ has declared necessary to Salvation.—If therefore you walk according to THESE DIRECTIONS, you will live in constant Communion with God—and Communion with Him here (and that alone) can fit you for eternal Happiness with Him hereafter; for without such Gospel Holiness, improved as God gives Time and Opportunity, we must expect to be for ever banished from his Presence.

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